

CLAIMS:

1. Apparatus for providing two-way communication between a first user and a further user comprising:
- 5 a master communication device; and
- a slave communication device, disguised as an everyday object, and including circuitry means for enabling said two-way communication via said master communication device; wherein
- 10 said slave communication device is disguised so that when said two-way communication is in progress, said first user will believe that said communication is between said first user and said everyday object.
- 15 2. The apparatus as claimed in claim 1 wherein:
- each communication device includes speaker means for providing an audible voice signal;
- microphone means for converting voice patterns of a user into a format for transmittal over a communication
- 20 link as a communication signal; and
- communication signal transmitting and receiving means for respectively transmitting and receiving at least one communication signal.
- 25 3. Apparatus as claimed in claim 1 or claim 2 wherein the disguise of said slave communication device comprises an outer body portion surrounding substantially all of the circuitry of said slave communication device.
- 30 4. The apparatus as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 3 wherein said disguise includes at least one movable portion arranged to move independently with respect of said body portion of the disguise and includes means for moving said movable portion responsive to a movement

control signal received from said master communication device.

5 Apparatus as claimed in claim 4 wherein said master communication device includes control means for generating and transmitting a movement control signal to said slave communication device.

10 6. The apparatus as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 5 wherein said slave communication device includes a power switch accessible without the need to remove said body portion.

15 7. Apparatus as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 6 wherein said apparatus is disguised as a teddy bear.

8. Apparatus as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 6 wherein said apparatus is disguised as a child's doll.

20 9. Apparatus as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 8 wherein said first user comprises a child and said further user comprises a parent or teacher.

25 10. The apparatus as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 8 wherein said first user comprises a user with learning difficulties.

30 11. The apparatus as claimed in claim 1 wherein said slave communication device comprises a computer including a user interface, said user interface including a screen for displaying an image of a character.

35 12. The apparatus as claimed in claim 11 wherein said user interface further comprises at least one speaker member for producing audible sounds to said first user.

13. The apparatus as claimed in claim 11 wherein said user interface further comprises at least one microphone for receiving audible sounds generated by said first user.

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14. The apparatus as claimed in claim 11 wherein the computer is arranged to display images which conceal the fact that a conversation is between said first user and said further user.

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15. The apparatus as claimed in claim 11 wherein said computer is optionally (i) a PC (ii) a laptop computer or (iii) a personal data assistant.

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16. The apparatus as claimed in claim 1 wherein said master communication device comprises a computer and said slave communication device comprises a screen for displaying an image of a character responsive to signals received from said computer.

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17. A method for providing two-way communication between a first user and a further user comprising the steps of:

providing a slave communication device, disguised as an everyday object, and a master communication device arranged for two-way communication therebetween;

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providing said further user with access to only said master communication device and said first user with access to only said slave device; and

transmitting and receiving at least one communication signal over a wireless communication link between said master and slave devices; whereby

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by virtue of the disguise of said slave communication device the two-way communication will appear, to said first user, to be between said first user and said everyday object.

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18. The method as claimed in claim 17 further comprising
disguising said slave communication device by the steps
of surrounding substantially all of the circuitry of said
5 slave communication device with a preformed body portion
formed to look like said everyday object.

19. The method as claimed in claim 17 or claim 18
further comprising, prior to said step of providing said
10 further user with access to only said master
communication device, providing said further user with
access to said slave communication device during a period
of time in which said further user may switch on power to
the slave communication device.

15 20. The method as claimed in claim 19 wherein said step
of switching power on comprises pressing a button
disguised on said slave communication device.

20 21. The method as claimed in any one of claims 17 to 20
wherein said steps of transmitting and receiving a
communication signal comprises providing a two-channel
radio service between said slave and master devices.

25 22. The method as claimed in any one of claims 17 to 21
further comprising:

transmitting, from said master communication device,
a movement control signal;

30 receiving said movement control signal at said slave
communication device; and

moving at least one movable portion of said disguise
independently with respect to said body portion on said
disguise of said slave communication device responsive to
said movement control signal.

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23. The method as claimed in claim 22 further comprising selecting a one from a plurality of movable portions of said disguise via said master communication device.

5 24. A method for promoting learning in a learner user comprising the steps of:

providing a slave communication device disguised as an everyday object and a master communication device;

transmitting and receiving at least one
10 communication signal over a wireless communication link between said master device and said slave device; whereby
a further user having access to only said master device can communicate, via said communication link, with
said learner user having access to only said slave device
15 thereby promoting learning in said learner user.

25. The method as claimed in claim 24 wherein said learner user comprises a child and said further user comprises a parent or teacher.

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26. The method as claimed in claim 24 wherein said learner user comprises a user with learning difficulties.

27. The method as claimed in any one of claims 24 to 26
25 wherein said everyday object comprises a toy.

28. Apparatus constructed and arranged substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to the accompanying drawings.

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29. A method substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to the accompanying drawings.

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